

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Favorable reconsideration of this application is respectfully requested.

Claims 1-24 are pending in this application. Claims 1-24 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over U.S. patent 6,397,020 to Kim in view of U.S. patent 6,385,406 to Funamizu et al. (herein "Funamizu"), U.S. patent 5,488,456 to Jamzadeh, and U.S. patent 6,301,452 to Yoshizawa.

Addressing the above-noted rejection, that rejection is traversed by the present response.

Initially, applicants note each of the independent claims is amended by the present response to clarify features recited therein. Specifically, independent claim 1 is amended by the present response to now clarify that the detection device is:

disposed in a side fence of a sheet feeding tray, the detection device further configured to detect an absence of sheets in the sheet feeding tray[.]

The other independent claims are similarly amended.

Such a feature as clarified in the claims is first believed to be fully supported by the original specification, as a non-limiting example in Figure 8. As shown for example in Figure 8 a reflective photosensor 40' is provided in a side fence 22 of a sheet feeding tray 21. That reflective photosensor 40' not only detects the type of a sheet based on an amount of light reflected by a surface of the sheet, but also detects an absence of sheets in the sheet feeding tray, as noted for example in the present specification at pages 23-25 in prenumbered paragraph [047].

The above-noted structure is believed to clearly distinguish over the applied art.

The applied art relies upon Jamzadeh to disclose a detection device placed below a sheet to be detected and Yoshizawa to disclose a detection device in an opening in a guide plate.

In that respect applicants note the claims recite different limitations than as previously recited and the teachings in Jamzadeh and Yoshizawa do not disclose the currently claimed limitations. Further, none of the cited art discloses or suggests the use of a detection device that can detect an amount of light reflected by a surface of a sheet being placed in a side fence of a sheet feeding tray, and also being used to detect an absence of sheets in the sheet feeding tray.

In such ways, each of claims 1-24 as currently written is believed to clearly recite features neither taught nor suggested by the applied art.

As no other issues are pending in this application, it is respectfully submitted that the present application is now in condition for allowance, and it is hereby respectfully requested that this case be passed to issue.

Respectfully submitted,

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